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Message Text

SECRET

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53
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /161 W
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R 211200Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 43
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T COLOMBO 2370

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UK, CE
SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS WITH BRITISH ON SOUTH ASIA

REF: LONDON 10718

1. RE PARA 8 REFTEL, WE TRUST DEPT WILL URGE BRITISH DURING FORTHCOMING WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS TO MAINTAIN ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA NEXT YEAR. GSL SEEMS ON POINT OF TAKING SOME HARD DECISIONS IN DIRECTION OF PUTTING ECONOMIC HOUSE IN ORDER, WHICH, IF ENACTED, WOULD CLEARLY JUSTIFY CONTINUATION EXTERNAL AID. FURTHER, IN RECOGNITION POTENTIALLY DISASTROUS FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION, GSL HAS JUST LAUNCHED FOOD PRODUCTION DRIVE AIMED AT REDUCING EXORBITANT FOOD IMPORT BILL. IF SUCCESS-FUL, RESULTING SAVINGS COULD BE DEVOTED TO DEVELOPMENT.

2. WE UNDERSTAND BRITISH POSITION AT PARIS AID GROUP MEETING IN FEBRUARY WAS WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE; BUT DESIRE DIVERT IF FROM CONSUMPTION TO DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED CHANNELS. WHILE GSL'S PERSEVERANCE AS USUAL REMAINS TO BE SEEN, PROSPECTS DO EXIST FOR EMERGENCY OF SITUATION RESPONDING TO BRITISH CONDITIONS. WE BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT NOW IS DEFINITELY NOT THE TIME TO WITHHOLD AID TO SRI LANKA.
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VAN HOLLEN

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Disposition Authority: garlanwa
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